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Security Council
Fifty-second Year

Provisional

3752nd Meeting
Friday, 14 March 1997, 4.30 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Wlosowicz	(Poland)
Members:	Chile	Mr. Larraín
	China	Mr. Wang Xuexian
	Costa Rica	Ms. Incera
	Egypt	Mr. Abdel Aziz
	France	Mr. Ladsous
	Guinea-Bissau	Mr. Cabral
	Japan	Mr. Konishi
	Kenya	Mr. Mahugu
	Portugal	Mr. Monteiro
	Republic of Korea	Mr. Park
	Russian Federation	Mr. Lavrov
	Sweden	Mr. Osvald
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Gomersall
	United States of America	Mr. Gnehm

Agenda

The situation in Tajikistan and along the Tajik-Afghan border

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Tajikistan (S/1997/198)

97-85269 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 4.30 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Tajikistan and along the Tajik-Afghan border

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Tajikistan (S/1997/198)

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Tajikistan in which he requests to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Alimov (Tajikistan) took a seat at the Council table.

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Tajikistan, document S/1997/198. Members of the Council also have before them document S/1997/216, which contains the text of a draft resolution prepared in the course of the Council's prior consultations.

I should like to draw the attention of the members of the Council to the following other documents: S/1997/169, letter dated 24 February 1997 from the Chargé d'affaires *ad interim* of the Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General; and S/1997/209, letter dated 10 March 1997 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General.

The first speaker is the representative of Tajikistan, on whom I now call.

Mr. Alimov (Tajikistan) (*interpretation from Russian*): I would first like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of March and to wish you every success in the discharge of your very important and responsible duties.

The restoration of peace, stability and civil harmony in Tajikistan has been and continues to be the central task with which my Government has been decisively dealing. Firm in its resolve to achieve a peaceful settlement of the conflict, the leadership of my country has moved step by step, consistently and stalwartly, towards that objective. The decisive efforts of the President of the Republic, Mr. Rakhmonov, have made it possible to progress towards complete national reconciliation.

As is well known, the agreement of 17 September 1994, the protocol on fundamental principles for the establishment of peace and national harmony in Tajikistan, dated 17 August 1995, and the agreements reached in Ashgabat and Khusdeh have marked the way. The direct talks between President Emomali Rakhmonov and the leadership of the United Tajik Opposition (UTO), Sayed Abdullo Nuri gave great impetus towards an inter-Tajik settlement. The documents they signed in Moscow on 23 December 1996 opened up a real possibility for the achievement of national harmony. The subsequent negotiations in Tehran further strengthened the peace process. The ceasefire agreement between the Government forces and the United Tajik Opposition have not been violated even once since December 1996.

The meeting between the President of Tajikistan and the leadership of the UTO in Mashhad on 20 and 21 February 1997 — in the course of which definitive solutions were found for certain controversial issues connected with the provisions of the Commission on National Reconciliation — added further impetus to the peace process, making it essentially irreversible.

An important step in strengthening mutual confidence was the consideration of the most complex military issues. The round of inter-Tajik negotiations held in Moscow from 26 February to 8 March was wholly devoted to this set of issues. It was successfully completed with the signing of the Protocol on Military Issues, which includes an agreement on reintegration, the disarmament and disbandment of UTO military units, the restructuring of power in the Republic of Tajikistan and a timetable for implementation.

At the invitation of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the next round of inter-Tajik negotiations will take place in Tehran, beginning on 9 April 1997.

Such active progress in the inter-Tajik negotiations was to a large extent possible thanks to the sincere support and assistance of the Russian Federation, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the observer States and international organizations, to which we would like to express our sincere gratitude. We owe particular thanks to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Tajikistan, Mr. Gerd Merrem and his staff in the Mission. They have made tangible contributions to achieving qualitative progress in the negotiations.

The March agreements in Moscow actually opened the door to a new, final stage of inter-Tajik political dialogue. A very important stage lies before us: their consistent and steadfast implementation. We hope that the Secretary-General will offer his good offices to achieve a full and effective implementation of the agreements signed. In that connection, we would welcome a decision by the Security Council to extend the mandate of the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan.

My Government is steadfast in its resolve to achieve — with the support of the world community, its allies and good neighbours — comprehensive national reconciliation and peace in our country. At the same time, we recognize that national reconciliation is not a single act, but rather a multifaceted and long-term process involving all segments of society, all regions of the country and all levels and dimensions of our society and our citizenry.

The moral and psychological climate in our society is still poisoned by the toxins that were unleashed during the civil war in our country. Unfortunately, this has been seen in the actions of those forces that in principle oppose the peace process, wish to complicate the situation in the country and want to reverse the process of political settlement. Such criminal actions have included attacks on United Nations personnel, taking peacekeepers and journalists hostage and terrorist acts against peace-loving citizens and personnel of a diplomatic mission in Dushanbe.

The February hostage crisis had great political ramifications. It was overcome through the intensive negotiations and the personal contribution of the President of the Republic. This showed the complex obstacles to a Tajik settlement. We are grateful to the Government of the Russian Federation and to all those who, with their harsh criticism of the situation and their active support, assisted the President and the Government of Tajikistan in achieving their release of the hostages. We would like to express our delight and gratitude to the entire military and civil staff of the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan for the devotion and bravery they demonstrated in complicated and often life-threatening situations as they carried out the very difficult duties assigned them by the Security Council.

Clearly, provocation, terrorism, violence and hostage-taking are occurring in an effort to cast doubt on the ability of the Government of Tajikistan to ensure order and stability in the country. Let me assure the Council that the President and the Government of Tajikistan, using all means available to them and in accordance with their responsibilities, will step up their efforts to combat criminal groups and will do everything necessary to ensure the security of international staff.

We express the hope that the additional measures taken by the Government to ensure the security of international personnel will create conditions conducive to the full resumption of the United Nations activities and its effective support for Tajikistan at a time when the country is going through a very difficult transition from armed conflict to peace.

The importance of increased activities of the United Nations and other international organizations in Tajikistan is predicated on the ongoing critical humanitarian situation in that country. Sharp reductions in the level of assistance for social welfare, health care and education; insufficient energy supplies for hospitals, schools and residences; and reduced real income for most families have hindered the ability of Tajikistan's population to meet its most basic human needs. The plight of many refugees and displaced persons is a persistent problem. Large-scale measures are required to eliminate the risks posed by mines, which threaten the lives and health of Tajiks.

We hope that the member States will respond to the consolidated international appeal for special humanitarian assistance called for by the Secretary-General and help Tajikistan to overcome the consequences of war and to restore its national economy. We are grateful to all those who have pledged their generous contributions.

All peoples of the world view peace as an opportunity not only for rebirth, but also for new hope. With the imminence of spring and our national holiday Navruz and their prospects for a speedy achievement of

peace and civil harmony in Tajikistan. my people are very hopeful.

Throughout the recent tragic years, the international community, and the United Nations above all, have made the greatest mediatory and humanitarian efforts to resolve the inter-Tajik conflict peacefully. Today more than ever before, we are approaching the possibility of reaping the tangible rewards of our joint efforts.

The President: I thank the representative of Tajikistan for his kind words addressed to me.

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to vote on the draft resolution before it. Unless I hear any objection, I shall put the draft resolution to the vote.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I shall first call on those members of the Council who wish to make statements before the voting.

Mr. Lavrov (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): The draft resolution before us today is a most timely and important Security Council response to the breakthrough that has occurred in the inter-Tajik settlement and to the request addressed to the United Nations by the Tajik parties for assistance in implementing the agreements concluded between them.

In recent months, the peaceful settlement process in Tajikistan has become increasingly irreversible. As a result of the recent meetings between Tajik President Rakhmonov and the leader of the United Tajik Opposition (UTO), Mr. Nuri, and of the agreements they have signed, as well as of the last two rounds of inter-Tajik talks, it has been possible to achieve a breakthrough towards implementing national reconciliation. The Russian Federation welcomes these results and urges the parties to pursue their efforts in that direction.

An important step in the Tajik settlement was the signing in Moscow on 8 March of the Protocol on Military Issues and the joint statement on the outcome of the Moscow round of inter-Tajik talks. The Protocol, which was signed by the parties and the Secretary-General's Special Representative, Mr. Merrem, contains detailed measures on the reintegration, disarmament and disbandment of the armed units of the UTO and on the reform of the power structures of the Government of Tajikistan. These basic documents can open the door to a final settlement.

We understand that the agreements reached remain fragile. In view of the forthcoming round of inter-Tajik talks, work must be completed on the protocol on political issues and other instruments. In these circumstances, the international community, and the United Nations in particular, has a decisive role to play in consolidating and implementing the outcome of the negotiations.

We attach particular significance to an early elaboration by the United Nations of the parameters of its contribution to the achievement of the inter-Tajik agreements so that it can render speedy assistance in the implementation of these agreements immediately after their entry into force. We consider central to the draft resolution before us those provisions in which the Security Council welcomes the inter-Tajik agreements and expresses its intention to consider the Secretary-General's recommendations on the manner in which the United Nations can assist in their implementation, in accordance with the requests of the parties.

There remain in Tajikistan open and covert opponents of a peaceful settlement, as attested by recent terrorist acts, including the taking of hostages and other steps aimed at the personnel of the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan, the Collective Peacekeeping Forces of the Commonwealth of Independent States and other international personnel. The Russian Federation has made great efforts to achieve the hostages' release; it condemns such acts and supports the draft resolution's call upon the parties to take rigorous measures to ensure the security of international personnel, thereby allowing the international community fully to resume and to expand its activities in Tajikistan.

The humanitarian situation in the country remains acute. The civil war has almost completely destroyed the country's economy. Many Tajiks have been compelled to abandon their homes, joining the many thousands of refugees. Together with other countries, Russia is providing assistance to Tajikistan. We believe that this nation must be actively supported in its difficult transition from armed conflict to normal life. We hope that this appeal will be heeded by all interested parties.

In supporting the noble efforts of the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Tajikistan, the Russian Federation intends in the future — in cooperation with the United Nations, the Conference on Security and

Cooperation in Europe, the observer countries at the negotiations and all interested States — actively to promote consistent progress in the inter-Tajik negotiating process and a final agreement on national reconciliation in Tajikistan.

Mr. Gnehm (United States of America): We welcome the Secretary-General's report of 5 March on the situation in Tajikistan and express our appreciation for the efforts of Special Representative Merrem to bring about a lasting solution to the conflict. Our thanks also go to the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT) for its contributions under stressful conditions, as well as to those member States that contributed personnel for UNMOT.

The United States is pleased with the progress being made in the inter-Tajik talks to bring an end to the conflict. In this regard, the United States supports the adoption of a three-month extension of UNMOT's mandate to signal the Council's encouragement of the political process.

The search for peace has gained momentum rapidly in the three months since the Council last renewed UNMOT's mandate. Since then the parties, in a spirit of compromise and reconciliation, have held two full negotiating rounds and another summit meeting. They have succeeded in abiding by an effective ceasefire, evolved a framework for restructuring the Government and sharing power and, most recently, at the latest Moscow round, agreed on a method of combining armed forces. The Protocol on Military Issues signed in Moscow represents a very significant, practical step forward towards building trust, ending Tajikistan's civil conflict and reintegrating the Tajik nation. We are grateful to the Russian Federation for facilitating those negotiations.

The United States congratulates the parties for these accomplishments and at the same time urges them to complete successfully the difficult task of negotiating peace for their country. We call upon the parties to implement fully their agreements and to ensure the participation of all their forces in implementing the accords.

In contrast to these successes, however, the security threat to international personnel has hindered the ability of the international community to assist the parties in their quest for peace. These threats have forced the Secretary-General to suspend United Nations activities in Tajikistan to the real detriment of the people of Tajikistan. This situation must be resolved immediately. In the last three months, unarmed UNMOT personnel have been taken hostage and subjected to gross mistreatment, including the threat of execution. Other international personnel have also fallen victim to similar abuse. A campaign of terrorism has targeted for assassination persons appearing to be ethnic Russians, including two guards at the United States Embassy. We are deeply concerned that this unacceptable security situation makes it impossible for UNMOT to fulfil the military portions of its mandate.

In this regard, we welcome the communiqué from President Rakhmonov and Mr. Nuri deploring acts of terrorism, and we call upon the parties to fulfil their commitments to create a reasonably safe environment for international personnel. We recognize that the Government of Tajikistan has made efforts to bring to justice some of the criminal elements responsible for these abuses.

Nevertheless, the United States cannot in good conscience condone the return of all UNMOT personnel to Tajikistan or another extension of its current mandate beyond 15 June until it is clear that the personnel will be able to carry out their mandate free of threats to their lives and liberty.

We look forward to continued good news from the inter-Tajik talks, and we look forward to an easing of the security situation so that the international community can return to its work. The establishment of peace in Tajikistan requires support for national reconciliation from the entire population of Tajikistan, from all its regions and from all its political movements. Reconciliation will create conditions for a democratic society and a peaceful and prosperous Tajikistan.

The President: I shall now put to the vote the draft resolution contained in document S/1997/216.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Chile, China, Costa Rica, Egypt, France, Guinea-Bissau, Japan, Kenya, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Sweden, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

The President: There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 1099 (1997).

There are no further speakers. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 4.55 p.m.